

THE
Compleat Marksman:

OR,

The TRUE ART
OF
SHOOTING-FLYING:

A

P O E M.

By the Hon. ROBERT COOTE, Esq;

*Ye rural Sportsmen lend an Ear,
Attend my Song, my Precepts hear;
Such ample Rules I here impart,
You'll learn with Ease the Shooting-Art.*

L O N D O N:

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T O T H E
H O N O U R A B L E A N D I N G E N I O U S
R O B E R T C O O T E, *Esq;*

S I R,

I HAD the Honour and Pleasure of seeing a beautiful *Poem* in *Manuscript*, intitled, THE COMPLEAT MARKSMAN; or, *The True Art of Shooting Flying*: And was informed, by the Gentleman who lent it me to peruse, that you are the Author of it.

I have, for above these twenty Years, been a great Lover and Practiser of that agreeable Recreation; and really had so much Vanity as to think myself so Compleat a Marksman, that I could not be excelled, if equalled; but your ingenious Performance has entirely suppressed my ambitious Thoughts, and absolutely convinced me that I was little more than *Half a Marksman*.

From your *judicious* Precepts, I have received such advantageous Directions, that I am now a far superior Artist in that delightful Employ; and therefore (as in Gratitude I ought) I return you my sincerest Thanks.

Pardon me, good Sir, if, to this Favour, I intreat you to add another; which is, that you would suffer your inimitable Performance to be printed and published: And I am confident you will thereby merit the Thanks and Admiration of all those Gentlemen who are fond of that entertaining Diversion, and will also confer the highest Obligations on,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

B. BULKELEY.

V E R S E S *sent to the* A U T H O R.

O Barb'rous, tho' ingenious *Coote*,
To teach us all, with Skill, to shoot.
Had Birds but Sense enough to know
Their mortal and impending Woe;
Poor tim'rous Things wou'd fear to fly,
And drooping sit, and pant, and die.

N. B. The Author received several more Epistles and Poems, in Commendation of this Performance, but would not suffer any more than these to be printed; they being all to the same Purport.

T O

TO ALL
Qualified SPORTSMEN.

GENTLEMEN,

THE utmost of my Ambition in composing and publishing this little Poem, was only to oblige and instruct my *Fellow Sportsmen*; and to communicate to them the Knowledge I have acquired and treasured up in this difficult Mystery.

I do not pretend to say that bare *Theory* alone will make a *Markfman*; but it must be confessed, by every impartial Person, that the Rules here set down, when joined with a little Practice, will compleat the Workman, or raise him to a very high Degree of Perfection in this agreeable and entertaining Sport.

R. C.

THE



T H E

Compleat Marksman.


 E rural *Sportsmen* lend an Ear,
 Attend my Song, my Precepts hear ;
 When Love, and Sleep, have crown'd the
 Night,
 Arise from Slumber with the Light ;
 When *Eastern* Streaks their Beams display,
 Arise, be clad, and haste away.

B

And

And should thy Wife display her Charms,
In Raptures clasp thee in her Arms;

With, "Prithee, Dearest, do not leave me!

"How can you take Delight to grieve me?

"And let me thus neglected lie,

"To turn, and sob, and pine, and sigh?

"I'm ever subject to thy Will——

"Indeed, my Dear, you use me ill!——

"And will you, will you, leave me so?——

"I swear, my Love, you shall not go!

"O cruel, barb'rous, scornful *One*,

"To leave me for your *Dogs*, and *Gun*!"

Re-

Regardless of such wheedling Art,
 With Speed arise, with Speed depart.
 Tell her, your Health some Air requires,
 To kindle Love's extinguish'd Fires ;
 That Exercise about the Fields
 A keen and hearty Stomach yields ;
 'Twill brace the Nerves, rejoice the Heart,
 Replete with Vigour ev'ry Part.

A sporting ne'er presume to come,
 Without a little Cordial *Rum* ;
 A proper *Wicker-Bottle* fill,
 That will contain about a Gill.

If sick, a Gulp will make you well ;
'Twill keep out Air, the Wind expel ;
And, should the *Gripes*, or *Cholic* seize ye,
A little Dram will quickly ease ye ;
Or, if your Spirits fail, a Dram
Adds Vigour to pursue the Game.

But, let your prudent Care be such,
As not to drink a Gulp too much :
A Sup is good to keep you warm,
A Sup too much will do you Harm ;
For, if a *Dram* too much you take,
It will your Sight unsteady make ;
'Twill blunt your Eyes, and spoil your Aim,
And then, my Friend, farewell the *Game*!

A *Morning-Sot*, without Dispute,
Can never aim, though he may shoot.

The *Marksman* should the Bottle spare,
At least, of all Excess beware;
If you a Dram unwisely take,
Some fatal Step perhaps you'll make :
The *Turkies* slay, the *Geese* destroy,
In Mischief all the Day employ.

Procure your *Tackle*, *Gun*, and all,
And then your cheerful *Pointers* call;
But, prithee, don't forget to bring
Into the Field, a *Partridge-Wing* ;

And

And having cleans'd, with utmost Care,
 The *Touch-Hole* from the Dust and Smear,
 Proceed to *charge*, and prime the Gun;
 (This must not *Over-Night* be done,
 For, if 'tis loaded *Over-Night*,
 The Prime will hiss, and not be right.)
 Prime not too full, 'twill merit Blame;
 The hanging Fire will spoil your Aim:
 The Reason is, if I must tell,
 The Pressure does the Flame repel.

In Charging, those who most excell,
 Take care to ram the *Powder* well;

But

But then, it must not be forgot,

To ram, with Tenderneſs, the Shot :

One *Third* of *Nitrous Duſt* will do,

And take of *Shot* the other *Two* :

Then ſearch for *Tow*, the Whole to cloſe,

The fitteſt Thing that can be choſe.

Be careful to obſerve my *Hints*,

Provide a *Turn-ſcrew*, *Worm*, and *Flints* ;

For though no Accidents ariſe,

To guard againſt them, muſt be wiſe.

For who would venture o'er a Den

Of Rogues, and Thieves, and Highwaymen,

Without

Without a Weapon of Defence ?

The Answer's plain,—*No Man of Sense.*

Perhaps the Reader may object,

And say, he might not be attack'd ;

I grant it true ; but if he should,

The Weapons then might do him good ;

And if you thus for *Chance* prepare,

You may your Accidents repair.

When thus equipp'd, your Sport pursue,

Regardless of the Dirt or Dew :

The loit'ring Fool should keep in Bed,

And there repose his drowsy Head :

Let

Let pamper'd Mortals stay at Home,

Such Wretches are unfit to come.

Whoever fails in any Part,

Can ne'er be Master of the Art.

Not eager, or without Concern;

A Medium in your Actions learn :

Be sure *Take Time*,---the chiefest Rule,

That's practic'd in the *Marksman's* School ;

Most giddy Youths the Sport confound,

By firing on improper Ground.

True Sportsmen *Stoic-like* should be

Quite easy, unconcern'd, and free ;

Not eager firing off at Random,
Or let a tim'rous Fear command 'em.

Suppose me going with a Friend,
In rural Sports, the Day to spend ;
Suppose we saw a *Feasant* sprung,
His flutt'ring Wings the Valleys rung !
Behold he mounts!—take Aim and Fire!---
Well done!---You've granted my Desire!---
He's down!---Well done, I do declare,
You've done your Bus'ness to a Hair.---
Quick, quick!---Recharge! don't let it rest!
And to your Dogs repose the rest.

Re-

Recharge! before the Air gets in!
 To loiter is a Shame and Sin;
 The Barrel will the Powder heat,
 And make the Charge the more complete;
 The *Touch-hole* too, if Haste you make,
 More freely will the Powder take.

Some, unacquainted with the Art,
 Will fall to cleansing every Part,
 Until the Piece has lost its Heat,
 And there succeeds a clammy Sweat.

And if the Bird be slightly touch'd,
 And down she fits most sily couch'd,

When you the Victim go to take,
 She may a second Effort make,
 And soar with broken Flight away,
 While you lament th'escaping Prey:
 For Feafants very often rise,
 And mount, with waddling Flight, the Skies,
 A Bird, that I've concluded slain,
 I've often seen to rise again,
 And to some distant Covert fly,
 To droop, and agonizing die,

Woodcocks, and Snites escape but rare,
 When in the Wing they wounded are;

But

But Peasants very seldom lie,
With mortal Wounds they often fly.

A Partridge sprung, Sir, Ha!---she's gone!
You'd Time enough!---you shot too soon!
Not *Twenty Yards* in Sight!---for Shame! }
You don't deserve a Marksman's Name!--- }
You'd maul'd her with a proper Aim! }

Permit her *Forty Yards* to go,
The *Gun* will surer Mischief sow:
But when too near, the Case is this;
You either mangle her, or miss.
And if too far you slightly wound,
Nor make the Game descend to Ground:

In

In shooting all Extremes refuse;
Take my Advice, a Medium choose.

But when the Trees confound the Scene,
You cannot keep the Golden Mean;
When *Woodcocks* dodge, we know no Laws,
Necessity admits no Pause.

In *Ersb* of Barley, Oats or Wheat,
Where charming *Quail*, and *Partridge* fit,
Or in the *Springs*, where lovely *Snite*,
Will bore, to please their Appetite;
Or where the *Polt* in open Heath,
Moves in an even Line from Death;

There

There, if the Piece be fully prov'd,
 Pursue the Mark when far remov'd;
 Raise up the Mouth *above* the Game,
 And fire away, with careful Aim.
 But judge before you execute;
 Take Aim, and not at Random shoot.

The *Cock* is indirect in Flight,
 Like rapid Lightning flies the Snite,
 'Till Distance overcomes her Fright,
 Then straight along they gently fly,
 And slightly wounded, fall, and lie.
 By Length and Motion of their Wings,
 (Which are such long, such cumb'rous Things)

So

So easy maim'd, when Twenty fall,
Perhaps none dead amongst them all.

When *Snites* receive a mortal Wound,
With steady Wings they skim around ;
Expanded open like a Kite,
They smoothly swim 'till spent in Flight ;
And where they fall *sans* Motion lie,
And seldom move, but silent die.

The gen'ral flying Marks are *Five*,
By those who to Perfection dive :
Observe, of *Lineals*, *Two* there are ;
A *Traverse* and a *Circular* ;

The

The Fifth *Oblique*, which none can teach,
But Practice, Perfectness can reach.

When Birds fly onward to your Face,
Stand still awhile, and let them pass ;
Unless some Trees behind you stand ;
Then manage with a careful Hand ;
Advance the Mouth above her Head,
And Ten to One you strike her dead.

When Birds fly from you in a Line,
With Care, I may pronounce them thine ;
Observe, with Skill, to raise your Piece,
'Till there's no open under Space,

D

Betwixt

Betwixt the Object and the Sight,
Then fire away, and stop her Flight.

Now I've the *Lineal Mark* display'd,
You stand in Need of further Aid ;
The *Traverse* next employs my Pen,
Not understood by many Men.

The *Traverse Cross-Mark* Skill requires:---
I've often heard your Country 'Squires,
In talking of this *Traverse* Shoot,
Sustain a very high Dispute.
Before the Bird, some always fire,
But that will nicest Time require ;

For

For should you too much Space admit,

The *Shot* will fly too quick to hit :

And if you give too little Space,

That's full as hazardous a Case.

The *Partridge*, flying swift as Wind,

Will dart, and bilk her Death behind,

Which makes it difficult to guess ;—

Your Time must be exact, or miss.

If you will my Instructions take,

You need not such strict Measures make,

Or take such wond'rous Pains, and Care ;

And stand a surer Chance by far.

Observe, that ev'ry skilful Spark,
 Will strive to gain a *Lineal Mark* ;
 Which better will Eight Feet allow,
 Than will the *Cross-Mark*, Inches two.

When Forty Yards to Left, or Right,
 The rapid *Partridge* steers her Flight ;
 Have at her with a *sideling* Line,
 I make no Doubt but she'll be thine ;
 But just behind, the Shot will glance,
 And, if you kill, 'tis all a Chance.

The Mark which Circular is term'd,
 With steady Care must be perform'd.

Attend

Attend the Motion of the Bird,
'Till she a proper Mark afford ;
Obtain with Skill, and cautious Scan,
The furthest Lineal Point you can ;
With Patience, move your Piece around, }
'Till you a proper Aim have found, }
Then fire ! and bring her to the Ground. }

See Jewel stands !---a Covey !---stay !

And have Regard to what I say :

When scatt'ring Birds in Numbers rise,

And various Marks confound the Eyes,

Be sure confine your Aim to *One*,

Regarding none but *That* alone.

Ex-

Experienc'd Men of One make sure,

And rest content with One secure :

The scatter'd Covey, if you wait,

May yet be your's by future Fate.

Young giddy Fools, who vainly hope,

By Chance, to pick a Number up,

Do often find themselves deceiv'd,

And with the random Fire retriev'd ;

Tho' many they may slightly wound,

They'll see none bounding on the Ground.

Come on, my Friend, the sultry Morn,

Draws forth the Coveys from the Corn ;

Or

Or else some Numbers may be found,
 In fertil Fields, the Wheat around,
 Sitting still to taste the Sun,
 Or, clucking to some Coppice run,
 To spurn the Dust, and waste the Noon;
 Some let us kill, and some disperse,
 And eat our Gains, while Setters curse.

When what the golden Harvest yields,
 Is carry'd from the fertil Fields,
 The Farmer's roomy Barn to crack,
 And lusty *Roger, Tom, and Jack,*
 With sturdy Blows are heard to beat,
 Their *Oats and Barley, Pease and Wheat.*

When

When *Leazers* give their Gleaning o'er,
 And pauper'd Earth affords no more;
 When Birds are all become so shy,
 At ev'ry little Noise to fly;
 At Eve, soon after *Phæbus*' Fall,
 You'll hear the Partridge screaming Call.
 The Coveys seek their Place of Rest,
 And fly towards their humble Nest:
 The old Ones call their Young, to come,
 And with their careful Dams go home:
 Look sharply at the Close of Day,
 You'll see these Kinsfolk skim away:
 Observe their Flight, with steady Care;
 Mark well the Place where they repair;

Which

Which in the Morning will afford,
A Banquet for the next Day's Board.

But in the Brightness of the Day,
They basking in the Hedges lay ;
The glorious Sun's Meridian Heat,
Makes that a charming sweet Retreat :
Securely there, they basking sit,
Nor will they such dear Mansions quit,
Unless some Noise, or Voice they hear,
And then with Speed away they steer.

Be careful; let your Steps be light,
For ev'ry trifling Noise will fright :

Except the *Quail* which lies so close,
 She'll near endure the *Lurcher's* Nose.

With Patience hunt ; the charming Prey,
 Will amply your Attendance pay :

Her Flights are short, observe her Fall,
 You'll spring her Twice, no Doubt at all.

When stiffen'd Earth by Frost is bound
 And flocking Larks bestrew the Ground.

The 'Cold affords mysterious Meat,
 Best nourish'd when they little eat.

The ambient Air their Pores constrains,
 And friendly *Cold* shuts up the Veins ;

From

From hence the Nutriment proceeds,
And ev'ry Grain some Fatness breeds.

But when bright *Sol* displays his Heat,
They poorer grow, tho' more they eat;
For in one melting, sultry Day,
Their Fatness all perspires away.

To fire at Flocks, take proper Care,
And thus your well-prov'd *Gun* prepare;
Observing to dispose your Charge,
As may dispense the *Shot* at large.
Of *Powder* take an equal Lot,
As you allow of circling *Shot* ;

Destruction then will scatt'ring take,
And many bleeding Victims make.

When thus prepar'd, begin to storm,
And fire amidst the rising Swarm,
And treble Slaughter you'll perform.

When Birds expansive rise in Air,
The Mark lies open, rais'd and fair,
And Ten Times more will dead be found,
Than if you shoot them on the Ground.

If you a *Mallard* chance to see,
Attend, and be advis'd by me:

If you're before him, hold your Arm,
 His guarded Breast no Shot can harm;
 And fire behind, where, less secure,
 He can the piercing *Shot* endure.

When rattling Winds do briskly blow,
Snites move against the Wind but flow;
 And they're so thinly clad behind,
 They seldom travel with the Wind,
 To guard against inclement Air,
 The Part which is so very bare.

The *Woodcocks* then short Flights will take,
 And *Feasants* to the Trees will make:

Then

Then fright them from the Boughs away,
And scorn to shoot the gazing Prey:
Poachers alone that Crime commit,
'Tis scorn'd by Men of Sense and Wit.

When stormy Winds offend the Skies,
You cannot hear the *Partridge* rise;
It drives the *Powder* in your Face,
And really that's a dang'rous Case.

And if, my Friend, it chance to rain,
Take my Advice, go home again,
That Day no farther Sport affords;
Farewell the Fields! Adieu the Birds!

The *Powder* gives, and Damp will grow,
 Take my Advice then ; prithee go :
 For should you stay, I'm sure your Gains,
 Will never pay for Half your Pains!--
 The Sport is o'er ! Away ! Away !
 For now 'tis all in vain to stay.

Then o'er a *Bowl* or Tub of Ale,
 Relate a merry useful Tale ;
 But ne'er without a jovial Soul,
 That loves the Sucking of a *Bowl*.
 And bid the Youths around, beware,
 To use the dang'rous Gun with Care :

And

And let your Sons these Stories know,
To arm against the distant Woe.

A blooming Youth, or rather Boy,
The Father's only Child and Joy,
Intent to make the Larks his Prey,
Himself as innocent as they ;
The Powder, in the Porch of Death,
In vain discharg'd its Flash of Breath.
The curious Youth desir'd to know,
Whether the Piece was charg'd, or no,
And at the Mouth began to blow :
A dreadful Kiss ! for now the Bane,
Had bor'd a Passage thro' the Train ;

It shot his Skull, and dash'd his Brains,
With Fury, all about the Plains.

Once more, let me entreat the Youth,
To listen to an useful Truth.

As through some Brambles mix'd with
Brake,
Young *Colin* did his Passage make,
Against a Sprig, the Cock he drew;
It fir'd, and thus himself he flew.

Unguarded Swains, remember this,
And to your Shoulders keep your Peice;

Nor on Uncertainties rely,
 The Gun remov'd may after fly:
 When having but a small Command,
 The Piece will fly from out your Hand;
 And you perhaps may Pains endure,
 Which *Doctor's* Arts can never cure.

Forgive me if I yet detain,
 And tire you with this Tragic Strain;
 For mine's the Labour, your's the Gain.

Next *Hammer'd Flints*, tho' much in Use,
 Do various Accidents produce ;

The

The Sparks into the Pan may fall,
 And make the fatal Piece recoil :
 The Muzzle, pointed at a Friend,
 May soon unthought Destruction send ;
 The Cock may at *Half Bent* go down ;
 True Sportsmen therefore mount the Gun :
 And walk with Flint restrain'd by Thumb,
 Left some unthought Misfortunes come ;
 But this unheeded is by some.

Such sad and dire Events have been,
 Such fatal Strokes in ev'ry Scene,
 That really I could not forbear,
 To caution and alarm your Care.

Sportf-

Sportsmen adieu ! my Words observe,

And I, at least, your Thanks deserve.

F I N I S.

